GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1550
ANSWERED ON:19.07.2004
CATCHING OF SNAKES
Thakkar Smt. Jayaben B.

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a)whether after the introduction of the Wildlife Protection Act that banned the catching of snakes a small community of snake charmers continue to practice the trade of catching over 400,000 snakes every year in defiance of the law; and

(b)if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government to check snake catching and killings and rehabilitation of snake charmers ?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA)

(a)& (b) Protection of wild life is primarily the responsibility of State Government. Reports of seizures of snakes, their parts and products received from time to time indicate that snakes are illegally captured for various purposes including road shows. The Central Government does not maintain the details of individual hunting and seizure cases. However, the details of some of the important seizures are at Annexure. The steps taken by the Government to check illegal activities are as follows:

i)Hunting (which inter-alia includes capturing, killing, poisoning, snaring and trapping) of snakes is prohibited as per the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. Inciting any animal to fight or bait any other animal is prohibited under the provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960.

ii)Under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, no person can acquire, receive or keep any snake specified in Schedule I or Part II of Schedule II in his possession without the certificate of ownership.

iii)The violation of the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 attracts severe punishments including imprisonment and fine.

The Ministry of Environment & Forests does not have any specific programme for rehabilitation of the snake charmers.

ANNEXURE ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) &(b) OF THE LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1550 DUE FOR REPLY ON 19.7.2004

Important seizures of snake skins and articles made therefrom

Sl.No	Item seized & quantity	Year of seizure
1	1323 nos of snake skins seized by the Tamil Nadu Forest Department	1994
2	900 nos snake skins seized by the Tamil Nadu Forest Department.	1995
3	80 nos. of cobra skin by the Regional Deputy Director, Wild Life Preservation (WR), Mumbai	2000
4	1757 snake skins of Cobra, Russels viper and others by the Regional Deputy Director, Wild Life Preservation (SR), Chennai.	2000
5	1029 pieces of snake skins and 3 pieces of garments made of snake skins by the Regional Deputy Director, Wild Life Preservation (NR), New Delhi.	2000

6	175 skins of snakes and lizards by the Regional Deputy Director, Wild Life Preservation (WR), Mumbai	2002
7	300 skins of Cobra, Russell's Viper, Water snake and Rat snake by the Regional Deputy Director, Wild Life Preservation (WR), Mumbai	2003